Speaking of Valery Larbaud, Philippe said to Ruyters: "It is always a pleasure to meet someone in comparison to whom Gide seems poor."[15]

18 October

Visit of the Paul Laurenses from 2 October until the 12th.

I returned from Paris, where I had spent a week. Painful fatigue, which continues even after the Laurenses have left. Yet I finish *La Porte etroite* on the 15th — and on the 16th shave off my mustache. Shocked by the lack of expression of my upper lip (as if something that has never yet spoken could suddenly become eloquent). How old I seem! *My poor Andre!" exclaims Em. on seeing me, and: <4You must see your mis* take/* (I do not see it so readily.)

Prodigiously beautiful, warm weather for the last three weeks at least, I return to Paris tomorrow.

24 December

Alexandre Natanson comes to pick me up at about two thirty to take me to the studio of the young Polish sculptor Nadelman.

He takes only a cursory, if not hostile glance at Piof s fresco. We get into a sixty-horse-power auto that he is trying out; we reach the rue Boissonnade.

I am going to set down some of his sentences; but the tone of the voice is needed; the intonation seems to add to each remark: <fiThat's the kind of man I amP

*When I leave you I must go to Billancourt," he says; "yes, to inspect a jam factory. It's an absolutely new process. They make jams . . ,"

'Without fruit?"

"No, but they don't cook the fruit; they freeze it; at a hundred and six degrees below zero [centigrade]. I tasted one the other day—a strawberry; extraordinary; as if it had just been picked; yes indeed; no difference at all."

"And you are going to finance the enterprise?"

"Oh no! … and yet I don't really know. With me you can't ever

tell; with me you can be sure of only one thing: that I'll never be concerned for long with the same enterprise. . . . But do you know that people like me are very valuable! I *am responsible for a vast circulation.* . . . For instance, I keep in my list of securities only the bad paper: whatever I can't sell. . . . Oh, I have enough to paper my bathroom with it! Occasionally my brother Thadee gets angry with me: 'But why do you load yourself down with such no-good investments that will only

[15] Charles-Louis Philippe lived in near poverty; Larbaud inherited a fortune accumulated from mineral springs at Vichy.